



Attendance Policy October 2017

Office use

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1. Policy statement and introduction

Diverse Academies Learning Partnership (DALP) is committed to supporting students to ensure that everyone achieves the highest level of attendance at school.

- a. It is recognised that poor attendance can result in restricted access to the curriculum, disaffection from school, lowered academic success and loss of educational opportunity.
- b. Good attendance means students achieving their potential.
- c. Partnership with parents is greatly appreciated. The students are our priority but when home and school work together we get the best possible student outcomes.
- d. All staff work closely with students and their families to ensure that students attend regularly and punctually and that all understand the link between attendance and attainment.
- e. DALP Academies have a system of rewards which acknowledge good attendance, improved attendance and good timekeeping.

2. Scope and purpose

2.1 This policy applies to all employees, including volunteers, agency workers, consultants or self-employed contractors.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve the minimum current national average for secondary schools of 95% and 96% for primary schools.
- attendance for all children, apart from those with diagnosed health issues, likely to lead to time off school.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to all aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the external agencies so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.

2.2 Legal requirements:

- a. Parents have a duty to ensure that their children receive full time education. (The Education Act 2002) Legal action may be instigated against parents/carers whose child's attendance is at an unacceptably low level and where parents/carers are failing to fulfil their responsibility. (Section 444(1) and 1(a)).

- b. The Academy will seek legal action through the local authority for continued poor attendance. This could result in a fixed penalty notice being issued.
- c. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to contact the academy on the first and each subsequent day of absence, unless a definite date of return is known. The academy will reach a decision whether the absence is authorised or not.
- d. From the 3rd day of unauthorised absence depending on the circumstances of the absence a designated member of staff may carry out a home visit.
- e. If your child's attendance falls below 96% whether absences are authorised or not, will be closely monitored.
- f. The academy may request medical evidence for an absence, we accept appointment cards or letters and prescribed medication cartons with the child's name.
- g. 20% absence is equivalent of missing 1 day a week in secondary education.
- h. An Academy is required to maintain an accurate register as a legal document on a session by session basis. A hard copy of the legal register must be processed.

The Academy will report all aspects of attendance through the trusts CSI process.

The report will identify students with less than 90% attendance, these students are referred to as Persistent Absentees (PA students).

3. Responsibility for implementing the policy

The Diverse Academies Learning Partnership (DALP) has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. The Trust has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Principal of each DALP Academy.

4. Authorised and Unauthorised absences:

Authorised absence is where the academy accepts there is good reason for an absence. Consideration for an authorised absence requires a written, or telephone communication, from the parent.

Pupils who return to school following an absence without an explanation will be deemed to have had an "unauthorised absence" until a suitable explanation has been given.

Where explanations are not forthcoming, the explanations are deemed unacceptable, or unreliable; these will be explored by the academy and if deemed as unauthorised may result in the issuing of a fixed penalty notice (FPN's)

Unauthorised absence is any absence which for example does not fall into the following categories: (This list is not exhaustive)

- (a) an absence caused by genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

- (b) an absence for an agreed religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.
- (c) family bereavement
- (d) situations where the academy authorises absence, e.g. study leave, work experience, interviews and special occasions such as theatre/sporting/musical performance.
- (e) medical appointments where proof is available
- (f) fixed term exclusion

Examples of unacceptable reasons for absence:

(This list is not exhaustive)

- (a) Truancy.
- (b) Minding the house / caring for younger siblings.
- (c) Shopping.
- (d) No school uniform.
- (e) To do homework / coursework.
- (f) Lateness.
- (g) Holidays.

5. School holidays

- a. Parents/carers are not entitled to remove children from the school for holidays as a right. Students should not have holiday time in addition to the normal school holidays.
- b. Notice of your intentions to take your child out during term time should be made in writing to the Principal.
- c. Holidays will not be granted retrospectively, based on an existing booking.
- d. DALP does not authorise holiday absences unless the request meets the exceptional circumstances outlined below, the exceptional circumstances will only be granted at the discretion of the head teacher:

These exceptional circumstances are: -

- Where families are service personnel
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- Other compassionate circumstances that can be confidentially shared with the academy
- e. The application letter must outline precisely what the exceptional circumstances are:
- f. If you take your child on holiday during term time you may be liable for a fixed penalty notice being issued. With or without prior notice by parents/carers.
- 3-day threshold for all Nottinghamshire schools and 4.5 days in Lincolnshire.

6. Support

6.1 Working with the academy

The academy will:

- a. Regularly and promptly record attendance
- b. Contact parents early when a student fails to attend school without a good reason
- c. Closely monitor students whose attendance falls below 97% in primary and 96% in a secondary, and put in place early intervention for those between 90-93% (those at risk of PA)
- d. Take into account any family bereavement
- e. Take into account medical and dental appointments when an appointment card is submitted
- f. Take into account Fixed Term Exclusions

6.2 Working with governors

Each term the designated person in each academy (usually PDBW lead or Attendance Officer) will prepare a report on attendance levels, sessions missed and reasons for the authorised and unauthorised absence for each year group/house. Any appropriate comments on action taken will also be reported.

6.3 Working with the Pastoral Teams

- a. Pastoral / attendance teams will monitor attendance daily and at the end of the week.
- b. Tutors will initially identify absence which causes concern, monitor and then discuss with Pastoral Team.
- c. Pastoral Team will liaise with the designated member of staff, who will then contact parents through telephone or letter regarding concerns.
- d. Pastoral Teams and the designated member of the attendance team will refer to outside agencies if attendance continues to cause concern.

Pastoral teams will ensure that all the appropriate procedures are followed.

6.4 Working with the Pastoral Support Administrators in Student Services

- a. An Attendance Administrator will during the morning session access the list of absent students, check that no contact has been made by parents/carers.
- b. As part of the first day absence protocol, they will then contact the parent/carers of all absentees where no knowledge of why they are absent is recorded. An outcome of the contact is recorded on the academy management system (SIMS/PARS/Scholarpack).
- c. If it is impossible to contact by electronic means or telephone calls a designated member of staff may carry out a home visit.

- d. The Academy will communicate to parents at the end of each term to notify them of their child's attendance at the academy.

6.5 Effective partnerships with outside agencies

We make great efforts to work alongside other agencies to bring about the best resolutions for children with attendance issues. To this end, we:

- provide designated staff for liaison with Family Services and other agencies
- carry out initial enquiries/intervention prior to referral
- gather and record relevant information to assist support and intervention with relevant agencies
- refer cases to Family Services when a pupil continues to have excessive amounts of unauthorised absence and/or lateness, despite interventions made
- hold termly attendance reviews with key school staff and our Family Services link worker for school attendance
- arrange multi-agency liaison meetings as appropriate
- establish and maintain a list of named contacts within the local community police force
- actively encourage the involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the academy.

6.6 Working with Parents/Carers

- a. Parents/carers are expected to provide the academy with up to date home and emergency contact details.
- b. Parents/carers must ensure that their child arrives in the academy on time and prepared for the academy day. Punctuality is monitored and may be subject to FPN (fixed penalty notices) for persistent lateness to school.
- c. Parents/carers are expected to support their child in maintaining at least the academy expectation for attendance for the duration of the academic year, unless medical or exceptional circumstance prevent this.
(<90% attendance is poor and treated as Persistent Absence by both the academy and the DFE, a student within this range will be classed as a persistent absentee).
- d. Failure to co-operate with an outside agency could lead to the Local Authority prosecuting parents of students with poor attendance. This could lead to the issue of a penalty notice or a 'fast track' to prosecution, (where parent may be summoned to a magistrate's court in just 12 weeks).
- e. The Assistant Principal (Pastoral) will determine in any cases where there is doubt whether an absence may be authorised.
- f. The role of parents/carers is crucial in ensuring that students achieve high levels of attendance.

6.7 Rewards

- a. Each half term letters are sent home to parents / carers of all students with 100% attendance.
- b. Individual attendance targets are agreed and in some cases awards are made for students working with the House Team or attendance team.
- c. Special recognition is given to good attendance- individually and by form- in house assemblies.
- d. For Students in Year 11 (if applicable), invitation to the prom is closely linked to attendance.

7. Monitoring of the Policy

7.1 The designated person in each academy (PDBW / AO) produces a termly report for the academy governors on Attendance levels, sessions missed and reasons for the authorised and unauthorised absence for each year group.

7.2 The Principal is given weekly updates.

8. Review of the Policy

This policy is reviewed annually by the Trust we will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively